

## Message Text

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13

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /055 W

----- 025749

R 070920Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6698

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, SN

SUBJECT: SINGAPORE ELECTIONS CALLED FOR DECEMBER 23

1. ENDING WEEKS OF COCKTAIL HOUR SPECULATION, THE RULING PEOPLE'S ACTION PARTY (PAP) HAS ORDAINED ELECTIONS FOR THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23. ON THE ADVICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, PRESIDENT SHEARES DISSOLVED PARLIAMENT DECEMBER 6. NOMINATION DAY WILL BE ON DECEMBER 13. THERE WILL THEREFORE BE ONLY TEN DAYS OF ELECTIONEERING, ONE MORE DAY THAN THE LEGAL MINIMUM. ELECTION DAY AUTOMATICALLY BECOMES A PUBLIC HOLIDAY.

2. ALTHOUGH OPPOSITION PARTIES HAD EXPECTED ELECTIONS TO BE CALLED WITHIN THE NEXT SIX WEEKS, THEY APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN SOMEWHAT OFF GUARD BY THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE EVE-OF-CHRISTMAS POL DATE. SPECULATION HAD FOCUSED ON THE ELECTION BEING CALLED ON A SATURDAY (THE TRADITIONAL ELECTION DAY IN SINGAPORE). HOWEVER, SINCE BOTH CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S DAY FALL ON A SATURDAY THIS YEAR, MANY OBSERVERS HAD BEGUN TO FEEL THAT

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THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE PUT OFF UNTIL NEXT MONTH.

3. NOT SURPRISINGLY, OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE UNHAPPINESS OVER THE SHORT NOTICE GIVEN, THE BREVITY OF THE ELECTIONEERING PERIOD. SINCE FORMAL CAMPAIGNING (SPEECHES, POSTERS, ETC.) CAN ONLY BEGIN ON NOMINATIONS DAY, THE OPPOSITION WILL HAVE ONLY TEN DAYS TO MAKE ITS CASE WITH THE ELECTORATE. THE MOST SCATHING CRITICISM OF THE ELECTION ANNOUNCEMENT CAME FROM DR. LEE SIEW CHOH, OF THE BARISAN SOSIALIS:

"THE PAP IS TRYING TO HAVE ANOTHER SNAP ELECTION AND GIVE THE OPPOSITION AS LITTLE TIME TO ORGANIZE AS POSSIBLE. UNLIKE IN A WESTERN DEMOCRACY, THE PAP WILL TELL YOU ONLY AT THE LAST BLOODY MINUTE."

4. STRAITS TIMES ARTICLE ANNOUNCING ELECTIONS ALSO PUBLISHED NAMES OF SIX INCUMBENT PAP MPS WHO REPORTEDLY WILL NOT RUN FOR RE-ELECTION THIS TIME. ELEVEN NEW PAP CANDIDATES WERE PREVIOUSLY NAMED. SINCE FOUR NEW CONSTITUENCIES HAVE BEEN CREATED, AND WEE TOON BOON IS NOT STANDING FOR RE-ELECTION, ONLY SIX INCUMBENT MPS NEED STEP DOWN. NONE OF THE MPS REPORTEDLY DROPPED HOLD MAJOR GOS POSITIONS.

HOLDRIDGE

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## Message Attributes

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